

Proposed NOSB Meeting Protocol

July 7, 2004

Issue:

The NOSB is composed of various stakeholders of the organic industry as is designated by OFPA. It is a voluntary board with some members that maintain positions with private industry. The board is also composed of individuals from different regions of the United State across all time zones.

Because of this board structure, it is a challenge for the board or even committees within the board to schedule both in person meetings as well as conference calls. These meetings are critical to the ongoing responsibilities of the board. Equally critical is complete participation of the board to ensure that the stakes are adequately represented. The balance between these two factors must be established to guarantee the organic community is best served.

At times, the board is presented with issues that demand immediate action due to the seriousness of the matter. These represent the hardest of time to contact board members and schedule mutually agreed meeting times. Yet, these subjects are of the nature that necessitates complete participation. Once again, industry balance must be achieved.

Like many advisory boards the NOSB and its members are faced with significant time management challenges. This coupled with the continued growth of the organic industry has created a challenging environment for scheduling calls, meetings and responses to unforeseen issues.

Consequently, the NOSB wishes to discuss protocols for scheduling the aforementioned with the hope of improving operational effectiveness. The following is offered as a draft for discussion.

Proposal:

Conference Calls

For full board conference calls, three weeks notice must be given to the members. This will reasonably allow for each to schedule the appropriate time to accommodate the call. The date and time of the call should be set by a consensus of the board through email discussion. All email requests for meeting times must provide 48 hours for response.

For committee calls, two weeks notice must be provided. The date and time set for the call is a product of committee dialog regarding the most conducive schedule. This dialog may occur on a previous conference call or through email. All email requests for meeting times must provide 48 hours for response

Emergency Call may be scheduled with less notice only after each member is contacted to reach a consensus on time and date of the meeting. If the members do not respond to email requests, the chair or their designee must contact the member by phone.

Perhaps we should consider instructing members to contact the entire board (via email) when they will not be available via email. I believe the Chair can contact members via phone when absolutely necessary. However, if this can be avoided it certainly makes sense from a time management perspective.

In Person Meetings

For any in person meeting, 3 months notice must be provided. *Under normal circumstances this is required.* To whatever extent possible, the date, time and location of the meeting shall be set by consensus of the board through email communications. Once again, all email requests must provide for 48 hours to respond. For public meetings all NOSB members shall remain at the meeting until the adjournment time (set by agenda) or if Chair officially adjourns meeting. *I really like this idea but realize that this is a volunteer board. Hopefully we can gain the support necessary.*

Emergency meetings may be scheduled with less notice only after each member has responded to the meeting request. If the request has not been responded to by email, the chair or their designee will contact members by phone.

Justification:

Each volunteer member of the board comes with different professional situations. Some are bound by rigorous travel schedules that require as much notice as possible to accommodate meetings.

The board's strength stems from the diversity of the stakeholders that are represented. It is important that this strength is used to the advantage of the organic community when supporting the Secretary in recommendations to the organic program.

These two aspects lead to the need for a clear protocol for the bringing together NOSB members for the continued work of the board. The above guidelines is presented to ensure that adequate notice is provided to all member while ensuring that the important work of the board is not delayed.